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ABSTRACT

About half of first-time beginning students report working toward either an associate's degree or a certificate. According to United States Department of Education statistics; 43% of 1989-90 beginning postsecondary students seeking an associate's degree had attained some degree of certificate five years after initial enrollment: 8% earned a bachelor's degree; slightly less than a quarter (23.7%) earned an associate's degree; and 11% earned a certificate. Furthermore, certificate seekers were more likely than associate degree seekers to attain a postsecondary credential (55% versus 43%, respectively); within five years of initial enrollment, 50% had earned a certificate, and 4% had earned an associate's degree. Regardless of initial degree objective, students who enrolled full time were more likely to attain either the degree they sought of a bachelor's degree than those who were enrolled part time. Finally, associate's degree seekers who delayed entry into postsecondary education by at least one year were much less likely to complete and associate's or bachelor's degree within five years than their counterparts who did not delay. (ECF)

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ED 411 918

Subbaccalaureate Persistence and Attainment.

Indicator of the Month

National Center for Education Statistics

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Subbaccalaureate persistence and attainment

October 1997

About half of first-time beginning students report working toward either an associate's degree or a certificate. These subbaccalaurate programs can offer occupationally specific training for immediate transition into the labor market or serve as a stepping stone to bachelor's degree programs. To help ensure successful outcomes for the increasing number of students seeking these credentials, it is crucial to understand the particular enrollment patterns associated with their completion.

- **Forty-three percent of 1989–90 beginning postsecondary students seeking an associate's degree had attained some degree or certificate 5 years after initial enrollment: 8 percent earned a bachelor's degree; slightly less than a quarter (23.7 percent) earned an associate's degree; and 11 percent earned a certificate. Students who did not earn a degree were enrolled for an average of 19 months.**

- **Certificate seekers were more likely than associate's degree seekers to attain a postsecondary credential (55 versus 43 percent, respectively). Within 5 years of initial enrollment in postsecondary education, half (50 percent) had earned a certificate, and 4 percent had earned an associate's degree. Students who had not earned a credential were enrolled an average of 11 months.**

- **Regardless of initial degree objective, students who enrolled full time were more likely to attain either the degree they sought or a bachelor's degree than those who were enrolled less than full time.**

- **Associate's degree seekers who delayed entry into postsecondary education by at least 1 year were much less likely to complete an associate's or bachelor's degree within 5 years than their counterparts who did not delay.**

Percentage distribution of 1989–90 beginning postsecondary students seeking an associate's degree or certificate, by persistence and attainment as of spring 1994 and selected enrollment characteristics

	Completed a degree				Did not complete a degree					
	Highest degree completed			Total	Total	Number of months enrolled[1]				Average
Enrollment characteristics	Bachelor's	Associate's	Certificate	any degree	no degree	Less than 9 months	9–18 months	19–27 months	28 months or more	months enrolled
Degree working toward in 1989-90[2]										
Associate's degree	7.5	23.7	11.4	42.6	57.4	12.8	20.5	9.4	14.8	19.2
Certificate	0.5	4.3	49.7	54.5	45.5	22.7	15.7	4.4	2.8	10.5
Enrollment status, first term										
Full-time										
Associate's degree	12.0	30.0	9.7	51.6	48.4	9.4	17.6	9.9	11.5	19.0
Certificate	0.7	4.5	56.3	61.5	38.5	23.1	11.6	1.8	2.0	8.8
Less than full-time										
Associate's degree	2.1	15.5	13.1	30.7	69.3	16.5	23.7	9.2	20.0	20.0
Certificate	0.0	2.8	38.5	41.4	58.7	22.8	23.8	7.5	4.5	12.3
Delayed entry status[3]										
Did not delay										
Associate's degree	11.9	32.1	10.0	54.0	46.0	9.1	13.4	7.6	16.0	22.5
Certificate	0.9	8.2	49.8	58.9	41.1	15.4	15.8	5.8	4.1	13.2
Delayed entry by at least 1 year										
Associate's degree	1.4	12.2	12.9	26.5	73.5	18.7	26.5	13.2	15.2	17.0
Certificate	0.2	2.9	51.2	54.3	45.7	24.7	15.2	3.3	2.5	9.9

[1] Includes students who were still enrolled.

[2] Limited to students seeking an associate's degree at 2-year institutions and students seeking a certificate at 2-year and less-than-2-year institutions.

[3] Excludes students with no high school diploma.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS: 90/94)

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

NCES 98-001

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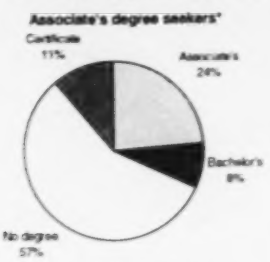
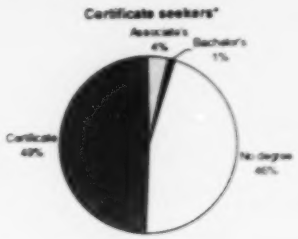
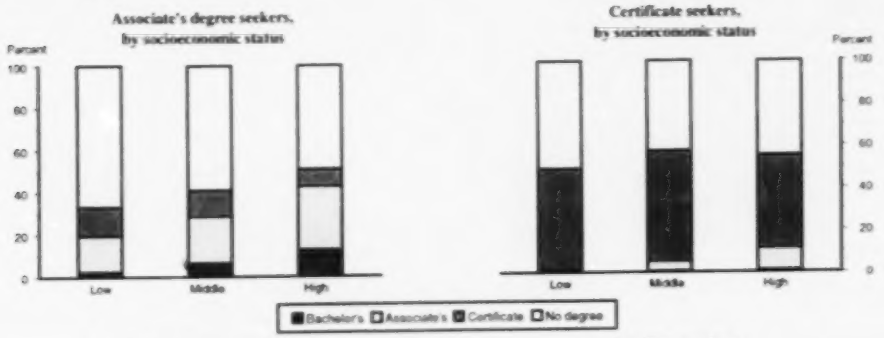
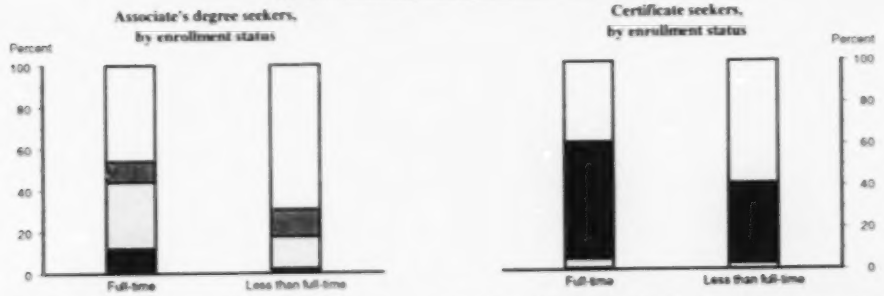
Percentage of 1989–90 postsecondary students seeking an associate's degree or certificate according to highest degree completed as of spring 1994









* Limited to students seeking an associate's degree at 2-year institutions and students seeking a certificate at 2-year and less-than-2-year institutions.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Second Follow-up (BPS:90/94)

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